



**The ITrain
Collective**

Overview of the Internet

Student Manual

August 1998

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Conventions used in this manual

All text in Italics is for the instructor. It gives the instructor hints on how to conduct the session. Some of the italicised text also provides sample answer material to questions posed by the instructor. If an instructor follows the approach contained in Italics, this will help to produce an interactive session in which participants get involved and learn more.

Bold text in the manual indicates key words that instructors and participants will find on their monitor screen when software is running.

3-D boxes with notes to instructors

The 3-D boxes throughout the course contain notes to the instructor.



This is a 3-D box with notes for the instructor. You can use it to prepare yourself before you conduct a course.

Icons

Icons appear in both the instructor manual and the participant manual. We included icons to draw attention to the text beside the icon and to give an immediate visual clue about the meaning of the material contained in the section.



Also in the instructor manual, the stopwatch icon indicates the estimated time to deliver a section of the course.

The following margin icons appear in both the instructor and participant manuals.



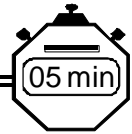
This margin icon indicates an exercise that participants are to complete.



This margin icon indicates that the accompanying text is a tip about some aspect of software or the Internet.

COURSE NOTES

The notes in the section that follows will help an instructor prepare to deliver a course about an overview of the Internet. These notes are very similar in both the instructor manual and the participant manual. The difference being that in the instructor manual there are some additional notes for instructors, including answer material for questions that instructors will be asking.



1. Introduction



While participants are arriving greet them individually, introduce yourself and ask them to write their names on name tags or another piece of identification that you provide. Now is the time to hand out the Student Manuals

Welcome to An Overview of the Internet. In this course you will learn about the ITrain Internet training programme and key concepts about the Internet.

In order to complete successfully the exercises in this course ,you will need to be familiar with Microsoft Windows and the use of a mouse. You will need to know how to open programmes in Windows, how to select items from pull-down menus, how to use a button bar, how to maximise and minimise a window, as well as how to select items from a Windows dialog box. If you do not meet these requirements, we have developed a computer handbook which you can use to upgrade your skills.

This manual is a reference for your personal learning. Feel free to make notes in your personal copy.

You can learn more about the ITrain Collective, of which this manual is a part, at <http://unganisha.idrc.ca/itrain> You can also join the ITrain mailing list for discussions about the use, customisation, and adaptation of the ITrain materials. To subscribe to the mailing list, send a message to <subscribe-itrain-1@lyris.idrc.ca>

Please fill out the evaluation form which you can find at the end of this manual. Your experience with the ITrain materials is important to us. Send your evaluation to itrain@unganisha.idrc.ca or to Steve Song at the *International Development Research Centre, P.O.Box 8500, Ontario, Canada, K1G 3H9. Tel. +1 613 236 6163 or Fax. +1 613 567 7748*



Somewhere early in the programme instructors should introduce themselves, briefly outlining their background and personal interest in the course.



2. Introductions and expectations of participants

- 1) Please introduce to the group, the person you interviewed. In a sentence or two, indicate what type of work the person does.

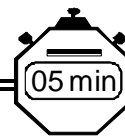
- 2) What experience with email does the person you introduced have?

- 3) What does the person you interviewed expect to learn from this course?



3. Course objectives

- 1) Explain the components and nature of the ITrain Internet Overview Course.**
- 2) Explain Internet myths and realities**
- 3) Explain the structure of the Net.**
- 4) Explain the benefits of the Net.**
- 5) Explain different ways to access the Net.**
- 6) Explain the functions of email, mailing lists and the World Wide Web — in general terms**



4. Components of the IDRC Internet Training Programme

The programme includes four main components:

- **An overview of the Internet:** This half-day course deals with the structure of the Internet, myths and realities, the physical Internet, uses of the Net, local services and demonstrations of email, the Web and mailing lists.
- **Using Email :** this one day course covers uses of email, qualities of good email messages, and key email features. It includes information about mailing lists. It comes in two versions: one for Eudora Light 3.0 and the other for Pegasus Mail 2.5.
- **Navigating the Web:** explains uses of the Web and how to use Netscape Navigator 3.x.
- The programme also includes a 30-page **Computer Handbook**. Among other things, the handbook provides support to help people meet the Windows prerequisites for the email and browser course.

Tip: using this manual



This participant manual and similar ones in the other IDRC courses follow the flow of the course. Areas with lines are for participants to complete exercises and record their notes, if they wish.



5. *The Internet: your perceptions*

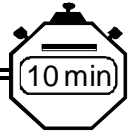
The Internet is different from other means of communication. The first time people hear about it they might have difficulty understanding what it is. Also, some people get confused about what the Internet does and what it does not do.

1) What have you heard about the Internet, or the information highway?

2) Is it costly to use the Net?

3) Do you need sophisticated equipment to use the Net?

4) Is the Internet a reliable source of information?



6. Internet structure

Figure 1 The physical components of the Internet

The physical Internet

The physical components of the Internet are normally:

- 1) a computer

- 2) your modem

3) wires, cables

4) telecommunication services (telephone lines, high-speed data lines, satellites)

5) host computers called servers

Tip



Understanding these physical components is a building block for understanding how the Internet works and solving problems when they occur.



7. **Internet services and software**

There are many Internet services and software packages including Email, the World Wide Web, Gopher, FTP, Chat, and Newsgroups, among others. In the ITrain Programme we will concentrate on:

- 1) Email and the email software Eudora and Pegasus

- 2) How could you use email?

- 3) Mailing lists

- 4) How could you use mailing lists?

- 5) The World Wide Web or Web and the browser Netscape Navigator

6) How could you use the World Wide Web?

7) What is the difference between the email and the World Wide Web?

8) What software is needed to use the Web? How do software and the physical Internet relate?



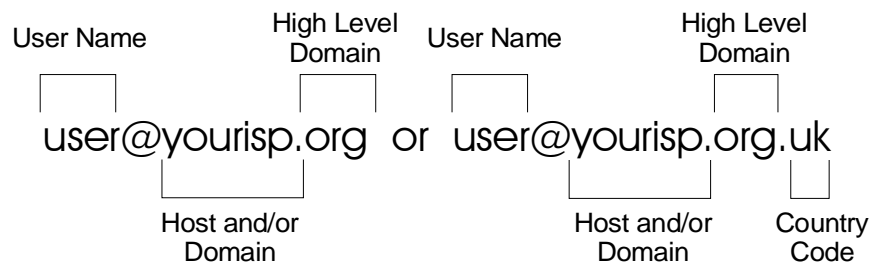
8. Understanding email addresses

Email addresses are like postal addresses. While the postal service uses an address to determine where to send a letter; the Internet decides where to send an email message based on an email address.

Components of an email address

Email addresses contain a user name, a host and/or domain name, and a code indicating either a top-level domain or country name.

Figure 14 The parts of an email address



User name

This is the part to the left of the @ sign. This is a name that a user selects, or has selected for him or her by a service provider or an email administrator. Often user names are a combination of a person's first and/or last names. For example, if your name were Sipho Nzimande, your user name might be 'snzimande'.

@

This is the distinguishing characteristic of email addresses. It is pronounced as 'at'.

Host and/or domain

The part of an email address to the right of the @ symbol refers to the name of the computer where the mail is to be sent. It can vary, depending on how the computer is named. The host is the name of the computer that hosts the Internet account where the email will be sent. The domain is the network that the computer is connected to. In our example 'yourisp' is the name of the computer.

Your turn



Review your personal email address or one assigned to you for this course or someone else's address. Indicate the user name, host or domain name and, if applicable, the country indicator.

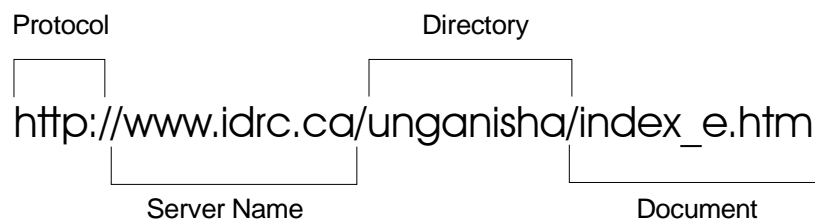


9. Understanding Web page addresses

Every Web page, and every document on the Web has a unique address. These addresses are called U-R-Ls or Universal Resource Locators. URLs contain letters and number understood by the Web. We can also understand what URLs mean. Understanding URLs will help you grasp some of the inner workings of the Web. In the long run you may be able to use this information to help you find useful information on the Web. We will explain more about this later when we discuss error messages.

Typically we use URLs to fetch a specific Web site. However, every item on the Net, whether it be a Web page, a graphic image, a sound file — has its own URL. We see the parts of a typical URL below and we provide explanations.

Figure 15 The parts of a URL



Protocol

Indicates which convention a browser will use to access the Net. Http stands for a Web sites, ftp for FTP sites, gopher for gopher sites and file for a file on your computer.

Server Name

Typically refers to a physical machine. In URLs for Web sites, this portion usually begins with www. Technically this section ends with a forward slash but you can usually omit it if you are not referring to a specific document.

Directory

This part points to specific directories on a Web server where a document is stored. Forward slashes are used to separate directories.

Document

This refers to an HTML document and it typically ends in .htm or .html.



10. *Demonstration of email*

Observe the instructor, listen closely to what is said and note tips on using email from the demonstration given by the instructor.



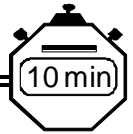
11. *Demonstration of the World Wide Web*

Observe the instructor, listen closely to what is said and note tips on using the WWW from the demonstration given by the instructor.



12. *Demonstration of a mailing list*

Observe the instructor, listen closely to what is said and note tips on using mailing list from the demonstration given by the instructor.



13. Internet security

Should you make purchases via the Web? Should you type your credit card number into the Web order forms? Here are some of the elements to consider when making purchases via the Internet.

Questions	Answers
1. What is the danger with buying through the Internet?	Information travelling between your computer and a server can be routed through many computer systems. It is conceivable that your information could be intercepted en route.
2. What could happen?	A computer can be used to eavesdrop and make copies of your information. An intermediary computer can be used to deceive you. It can misrepresent itself as your intended destination.
3. What can I do?	Protect yourself by dealing with secure sites that use encryption. Your software has security warnings that you can turn on to indicate if sites are secure. (Unfortunately, people are not rushing to use secure sights.) Symbols on browsers indicate if sites are secure. For example, in Navigator, a closed lock indicates a secure site.
4. Is there a complete solution?	Security technology does not protect you from dishonest or careless people with whom you might do business. The situation is similar to telling someone your credit card number over the telephone. You have to decide whether you trust the person and the company.
5. How can I learn more?	Connect to your ISP. Launch Netscape. Select Help, On Security . Or you could use an Internet search engine to find what is on the World Wide Web about "Internet security."



14. Distribution of a Computer Handbook



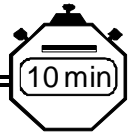
15. Tour of facility (optional)

Notes from a tour of an ISP facility.



16. Hands on practice

Notes from practice



17. Conclusion

Now that you have had a quick overview, where do you think the Internet might apply to your work? Consider email, mailing lists and the Web separately.

What are the types of things you will have to learn in order to achieve what you have identified above.

18. Choosing an Internet Services Provider

This section is a reference for you when it comes time to select an Internet service provider.

Choosing an Internet Service Provider requires you to weigh several factors. There is no such thing as the “best” Internet Service Provider. You need to weigh the importance of cost, performance, and technical support. There are several issues that stand out as key differences between them. They are ratios, speed, and, of course, price:

1. Ratios

Ask what the user to line ratio is -- the ratio is how many lines the ISP has compared to how many users they are subscribed. If they have 100 users and only 10 lines, that is a 10:1 ratio.

2. Speed

If you have Internet access already, but are shopping around for a new ISP, be sure to visit their Web page and see how fast it loads compared to other local sites; this is a likely sign of how fast the ISP actually is. Find out what connection speed is offered. Does it at least equal your modem speed? What upgrades does the ISP have in mind.

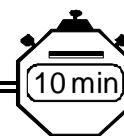
3. Price

Just because an ISP is cheap doesn't mean it's not good. If all the information checks out, then go for it. Compare the prices to ratios to the other features and offers and make your choice on an overall basis.

Conclusion

Ask your questions — all of them, and get all the information you need from all prospective ISPs. Here are some suggested questions.

- 1) Is there more than one subscriber plan? What are the details?
- 2) What hardware will you require?
- 3) What is the ratio of lines to users.
- 4) What help desk services are available and other technical support.
- 5) Does the ISP provide a starter kit for the operating system you own? Does it come with a printed manual?
- 6) Can you use any Web browser and email package you choose?
- 7) Can you post your own Web Pages to the ISP's site?



19. Evaluation: to be completed by participants

One important part of training is to receive specific feedback from people who use the materials. With that in mind we have created a questionnaire for your comments. Please treat this questionnaire as a guideline. Feel free to add comments about any areas you feel we have missed. Please send your evaluation to the address provided in the introduction to this manual. Evaluation forms can also be filled out online at the ITrain web site: <http://unganisha.idrc.ca/itrain/evaluation/>

Your name and email

address: _____

_____ Sex:
male / female

Course name: _____

Duration in hours: _____ Date: _____

Location: _____

Number and sex of instructors and coaches: -

Number and sex of students:

Describe in a few words your cultural background:

Please indicate your answers below with an x or a check.

	Your level of interest			Level of difficulty		
	high	medium	low	high	medium	low
1) Introduction						
2) Introductions and expectations of participants						
3) Course Objectives						

	Your level of interest			Level of difficulty		
	high	medium	low	high	medium	low
4) Components of the Itrain programme						
5) The Internet: your perceptions						
6) Internet Structure						
7) Internet Services and Software						
8) Understanding email addresses						
9) Understanding Web page addresses						
10) Demo instruction of email						
11) Demo instruction of the Web						
12) Demo instruction of a mailing list						
13) Internet security						
14) Distribution of an Computer Handbook						
15) Tour of facility (optional)						
16) Hands on practice						
17) Conclusion						

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Questions	Ranking				
strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, 5 agree strongly					
	1	2	3	4	5
18) The introductory exercise was helpful.					
19) The notes for participants were easy to read					
20) The layout of the manual made it easy to follow.					
21) The words used in the manual were easy to understand.					
22) The explanations in the manual were easy to understand.					
23) The manual was the right length.					
24) The graphics of the manual were easy to read.					
25) This course will help me use the Internet.					
26) The training was what I thought it would be.					

27) Topics that should be added.

28) Topics that should be removed.

29) Other comments.

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